

'The Rose Bowl of Yacht Racing, Granddaddy of Them All' Heading for Straits This Weekend

Yacht Race: From page 1

Mr. Wilson takes the place at the *Stars and Stripes* helm, formerly held by longtime sailor and Chicago commodities broker Steve Fossett, who died in February at age 63 in the crash of an aircraft he was piloting.

Mr. Fossett sailed *Stars & Stripes* in 1998 to a new multihull record for fastest finish at 18 hours, 50 minutes, 32 seconds. This is the first time since 1998 that *Stars & Stripes* will have competed in the Chicago to Mackinac Race.

"This is sort of the Rose Bowl of yacht racing; it's the granddaddy of them all," said Chicago Yacht Club Chairman Greg Miarecki, comparing the race to college football's most prestigious postseason event. "It's a tremendous tradition. There are many races that have a bigger payout, but very few races can say they have been doing this since 1898."

The race course itself is as adventurous as any, being the biggest freshwater yacht race in the world, he said.

"This race is the most competitive on the Great Lakes," said Mr. Miarecki. "It's not just racing around orange buoys. You have great competition, great scenery, and you're actually going to a destination. This is as good as it gets in the Great Lakes. And to be perfectly honest, it's as good as it gets in the United States."

As a special addition to the historic event, Roy Disney has been named honorary chairman. Mr. Disney's *Pyewacket* owns the record for fastest finish for monohulls, with an elapsed time of 23 hours, 30 minutes, and 34 seconds, set in 2002.

The race will also be chronicled by popular television sailing journalist Gary Jobson, who will film a piece on the race and its history to be aired on ESPN later this fall. CNN may also broadcast the start of the race in Chicago, as well, said Mr. Freeman.

Mr. Miarecki has raced 22 times in the Chicago-to-Mackinac Race. Now, as the club's chairman since last August, he is honored to be part of the race's 100th event.

"I admit it's a thrill of a lifetime, but it's not because of whatever press it may attract," he said, "but the opportunity to put a tremendous crown on a fantastic legacy."

The race has always allowed families to compete together, something most high-profile sports never see, said Mr. Miarecki, who often raced with family members.

"By and large, the race makes for a much more rich event because it includes fathers, sons, and grandfathers competing together," he said. "You can't do that in most organized, competitive sports."

That and the camaraderie among the crew and the vastness of Lake Michigan separates this race from

How many will compete, and how will local harbors fit them all in?

The Race to Mackinac began in 1898 with five yachts competing. It was not held again until 1904 and was put on hold again from 1917 to 1920, owing to World War I. It has been ongoing for 87 consecutive years now, since 1921, and annually sees about 300 boats competing.

In past races, the largest number of boats competing in one year was 325, set in 1998, but, owing to this year's historic emphasis and cooperation between the Chicago Yacht Club and marinas in Mackinaw City and St. Ignace, the club was able to attract more boats.

The race begins Saturday with a parade of boats at Navy Pier from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Boats will begin the race between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. 1.5 miles from Navy Pier, grouped in departures at 10- to 40-minute intervals, with the first boat expected to arrive in the Straits area Tuesday, July 22. The event will be capped off by fireworks on Mackinac Island

Tuesday at dusk.

The finish line is a line set up between the yacht club's Island headquarters at Windermere Point and the Round Island Lighthouse.

The biggest buzz about this year's race has been the number of competitors, said Race Coordinator Amanda Matta.

"That's been the biggest question from racers is how many will be competing," she said. "The next question is how we're fitting them all in."

That project was handed to yacht club Vice Chairman Greg Freeman and a small committee, who mapped out the Island's harbor using paper and stickers at the Chicago clubhouse.

"We were literally crawling on our hands and knees mocking up how to fit 400-something boats in the harbor," said Mr. Freeman, who will be in his 23rd Chi-Mac race with the Chicago-based 42-footer *Salsa*, on which he serves as navigator for the crew. "We've

spent hundreds of hours figuring it out. We've put a lot of time and thought into this."

Mr. Freeman said the club has had tremendous volunteer support for this year's race, with about 60 people lined up to help at both ends.

In the past, the docking scheme was simply to raft boats side to side as they came in, said Mr. Freeman. This year, the club has split the harbor into zones and will assign each boat to a docking spot based on the size of the boat.

"Everyone should have a good idea where to park when they radio in at the finish line," he said. "We've never done this before, but I'm confident it will work."

For those boats that dock at the mainland, the club has set up transportation to the Island via special ferry departures on Shepler and Arnold Transit boats Monday and Tuesday evening. At 11:30 p.m., a Shepler's ferry will depart from Mackinaw City and

an Arnold Transit ferry will depart from St. Ignace. Both ferries will then depart from the Island and return to their mainland destinations at midnight.

Planning for this year's race began last July and, by December, the club had reached 460, the maximum number of boaters that facilities in the Straits of Mackinac can accommodate. By Tuesday, July 8, the list of registered boats had dropped to 439.

"We've never turned away anyone in past races, but this year, because everyone wants to be a part of this historical event, we had to turn away 80 boats," said Chicago Yacht Club Chairman Greg Miarecki.

Yachts will raft off the 76-slip Mackinac Island marina and between the Arnold Transit dock and coal dock.

About 100 boats will be docked at St. Ignace and up to 35 will be moored at Mackinaw City.

others, said Mr. Freeman.

"Some of the thrill is the distance and part of it is just being on the open water for two or three days," said Mr. Freeman, "but, just as Greg Miarecki said, it's also about sailing with family and friends."

"It's going to be a very exciting time, certainly with it being a historic year for the race," said 33-term Mackinac Island Mayor Margaret Doud, who is also manager of Windermere Hotel, which hosts race committee members. "I think everyone is looking forward to a fun time."

One of her guests will be Kay Baxter, a member of the race committee for more than 25 years, who will be celebrating her 81st birthday.

Island Will be Where 'Yacht Is King,' Temporarily

With roughly 4,500 sailors and family members and 440 yachts coming to Mackinac Island, preparations among the Chicago Yacht Club, City of Mackinac Island, and

local authorities have been underway for months.

Officers from the city, state, and county will be on hand, as well as additional emergency medical technicians, with marine support from Mackinac County Sheriff's Department and U.S. Coast Guard.

A committee of Mackinac Island city leaders met Wednesday, July 2, to review preparations for the race.

"I think we're OK, we should have plenty of help," said Island Police Chief Jim Marks, who has been working closely with club Vice Chairman Greg Freeman in accommodating all of the racers, their families, and other potential spectators.

The club will have teams on hand to assist Mackinac Island Marina staff with docking boats, and there will be a team set up at the Windermere Point headquarters, as well, said Race Coordinator Amanda Matta.

Some concerns the committee discussed were overall safety, overcrowding in bars and restaurants, and late night public behavior.

Last year, police did not find overcrowding in bars, which is considered a fire code violation.

The Island's corps of eight emergency medical technicians will have additional support from Allied EMS in St. Ignace, said EMT Rick Linn. Dr. Karen Miljour said she and her medical center staff of two nurses and a resident are ready for the race.

Sobriety Court Graduate Examines Experiences That Led to Abuse

Sobriety: From page 3

alcoholic. When an accumulation of challenging events over a short period of time took their toll, she began to drink. Her entire life changed in months as she became an "empty nest" parent, she went into menopause, her mother became ill, and her husband died.

"It was just life," she said, looking back at what fueled her drinking problem. "I was never a drinker."

The program, counseling, and people involved helped change her life.

"It's a big lifestyle change," she said. "Just about everything has to change. Your friends and your habits."

The Sobriety Court forced her to face her addiction, she said, and put her on the right track. The individual and group counseling helped her identify things in her life she needed to understand and guided her through lifestyle changes. Her body gradually adjusted to not having alcohol. Family, new friends, her employer, and the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) community, she said, gave her the support she needed.

"I never would have gone to an AA meeting if I had not been in the Sobriety Court," she said. "That works for me. Unless you're ready

to quit drinking, you're not going to."

Attending the meetings let her know she was not alone, was not the only one sober.

"The AA family got me sober," she said, "and kept me so."

Editor's Note: Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held regularly in several locations in Mackinac County. They are listed, space permitting, on the community calendar each week in The St. Ignace News. To be put in touch with a local coordinator for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, call Zion Lutheran Church at 643-7870.

Movies Playing July 11 - July 17	
Kingston Theatre Cheboygan • (231) 627-5376 Adults (12-59) 7 ²⁵ • Child (3-11) 4 ⁵⁰ • Seniors (60+) 5 ⁵⁰	Courtyard Cinema Mackinaw City • (231) 436-7890 Adults (12-59) 7 ²⁵ • Child (3-11) 4 ⁵⁰ • Seniors (60+) 5 ⁵⁰ Matinees (until 4 p.m.) All Seats 1 ⁵⁰
Journey to the Center of the Earth PG Daily at 1:00, 3:00, 7:00, & 9:00	The Dark Knight PG-13 Daily at 1:30, 4:00, 7:00, & 9:30
The Dark Knight PG-13 Daily at 1:00, 3:45, & 7:00, & 9:00	Hellboy II: The Golden Army PG-13 Daily at 2:00, 4:15, 7:00, & 9:15
Hancock PG-13 Daily at 1:00, 3:00, 7:00, & 9:00	Hancock PG-13 Daily at 2:00, 4:00, 7:00, & 9:00
Space Chimps G Daily at 1:00, 3:00, & 7:00	Wall-E G Daily at 2:00, 4:00, 7:00, & 9:00
Wall-E G Daily at 1:00, 3:00, 7:00, & 9:00	Mamma Mia PG-13 Daily at 2:00, 4:15, 7:00, & 9:15
Meet Dave PG Nightly at 9:00	



Nora Massey Mackinac County Treasurer

Hi, if you haven't already met me I would like to introduce myself. I am your Mackinac County Treasurer.

As of May 1st this year I was appointed to serve out the term vacated by Jane Hampton who was the treasurer for the last 20 years. I served as Jane's deputy for the last 19 years. Being the deputy treasurer for all those years my name and face was in the back-

ground. For the last 8 weeks I have been trying to get out into the county after work and on weekends to meet as many of you as possible. After 19 years as deputy treasurer and almost 3 months as county treasurer I have gained a wealth of knowledge and experience in the treasurer's office.

I am fully aware of what the job is. Some important duties include property tax administration, receiving and accounting of all county moneys, and investing the cash surplus of your money using all parameters governing AUTHORIZED investment protocols.

I have adopted an open door policy and welcome constructive change. Based on my experience and listening to my county constituents I have extended our hours to include the lunch hour for your convenience. Secondly, I will now accept partial payments on all delinquent taxes. I have and will work with all county and township officials to best serve all citizens of Mackinac County.

"KEEP EXPERIENCE"
Vote Tuesday, August 5th
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Paid for by the committee to elect Nora Massey Mackinac County Treasurer



Michigan companies are focused on protecting the environment and going green. From Lansing-based Granger with state-of-the-art landfill gas renewable energy technology to Recycling Concepts of West Michigan Inc., which was named a Michigan Clean Corporate Citizen.

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